REMARKS

Claims 1-12, and 14-26 are presented for examination.

Examiner's assistance during the August 10, 2005 Examiner's Interview is greatly appreciated.

To address the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, claim 3 dependent from claim 1 has been amended per the Examiner's suggestion to recite the control system is configured for assigning the pick-up station for obtaining the purchase that was ordered before the customer arrives at the purchase obtaining facility.

Independent claims 1, 14 and 22 have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions expressed during the Interview to more clearly define the claimed invention over the prior art. The dependent claims have been amended to make them consistent with the respective independent claims.

In particular, claim 1 has been amended to recite an identification station for receiving identification (ID) data provided by the customer, and a control system for receiving the ID data from the identification station to automatically assign a pick-up station of the multiple pick-up stations to the customer in order to increase throughput of the drive-through purchase obtaining facility when the customer arrives to pick up the purchase ordered in advance.

Claim 14, as amended, recites receiving identification (ID) information from the customer that arrives at the drive-through purchase obtaining facility to obtain the ordered purchase, and transferring the ID information to a control system for automatically assigning to the customer a pick-up station of the multiple pick-up stations and issuing a request to deliver the ordered purchase to the assigned pick-up station in response to the ID information.

Claim 22 has been amended to recite an identification station for receiving identification (ID) information from the customer that arrives to obtain the purchase ordered in advance, and a control system for receiving the ID information from the identification station to automatically assign a pick-up station of said multiple purchase pick-up stations to the customer in order to increase throughput of the retail facility when the customer arrives to obtain the purchase ordered in advance.

As discussed during the Examiner's Interview, the Domain patent relied upon for disclosing the assignment of pick-up stations does not teach or suggest an identification station for receiving identification (ID) information from the customer that arrives to obtain the purchase ordered in advance, and a control system for receiving the ID information from the identification station to automatically assign a pick-up station of said multiple purchase pick-up stations to the customer.

Instead, Domain discloses that "the customer receives instructions from the order clerk as to which pick-up station to drive to." Moreover, the reference does not disclose that the customer provides any ID information for assigning a pick-up station.

Further, Domain does not suggest assigning a pick-up station to the customer in order to increase throughput of the retail facility when the customer arrives to obtain the purchase ordered in advance. Instead, Domain teaches that the orders placed in advance are picked up through the drive-in or walk-up windows rather than at the pick-up stations. The reference does not suggest assigning these drive-in or walk-up windows to customers to increase the throughput of the facility for customers that arrive to pick-up the orders placed in advance.

Moreover, it is submitted that Domain does not address the problem of increasing the throughput of the retail facility when the pick-up stations are assigned. The pick-up stations of

Domain are provided to obtain goods ordered at the retail facility. Therefore, one skilled in the art would realize that customers should wait a substantial period of time until their ordered goods are collected from different vendors, packed and delivered to the assigned pick-up station. This time period substantially exceeds any waiting period associated with a line at the pick-up station. Accordingly, assigning the pick-up stations does not increase the throughput of the Domain system.

Further, as discussed above, Domain does not disclose transferring ID information received from a customer to a control system for assigning to the customer a pick-up station and issuing a request to deliver the ordered purchase to the assigned pick-up station in response to the ID information, as independent method claim 14 requires.

Accordingly, independent claims 1, 14 and 22 are clearly define over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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